UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

Thirtieth session
Beirut, 25-28 June 2018

Information for participants

2018

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18-00202

I. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

The thirtieth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) will be held at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon, from 25 to 28 June 2018.

Representatives of ESCWA member States will participate in the session, which will also be attended by representatives invited as observers from member States of the United Nations, relevant United Nations organs and specialized agencies, interested regional and intergovernmental organizations, organizations and entities having permanent observer status with the General Assembly, and non-governmental organizations having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. Participants shall bear the cost of their travel and accommodation throughout the duration of the session.

Member States will be represented at the ministerial level and their delegations will include experts in technological, economic and social fields. The main theme of the session, which covers several public policy issues in the Arab region, is "Technology for sustainable development in the Arab region".

Credentials

In accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission, **official credentials duly signed** by the appropriate authorities in member States, agencies or organizations **should be submitted** to Mr. Karim Khalil, Secretary of the Commission (khalil31@un.org; fax +961-1-981510/1), **one week before the opening of the session**, if possible, or to the registration desk at ESCWA, at the time of registration.

Arrival in and departure from Beirut

The composition of delegations and expected dates and times of arrival should be communicated to the ESCWA secretariat no later than two weeks prior to the opening of the session. Participants in the session should apply for a visa at the Embassy of Lebanon in their respective countries as required.

II. CONFERENCE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The ESCWA secretariat will provide, for as long as is required, including during the preparatory meetings and the period following session meetings, the needed premises, including a conference room, meeting rooms and related amenities.

The conference room will have facilities for sound recording and will be equipped for simultaneous interpretation for Arabic and English.

Staff members of the ESCWA Conference Services Section will be responsible for registering delegates and preparing a provisional list of participants. They will also provide information on, and support with regard to, meeting services, including the distribution of documents; agenda; interpretation equipment; and the editing, translation, printing and distribution of the final report of the thirtieth session.

Registration and identification

Participants are invited to register online at their earliest convenience using the following link: http://reg.unog.ch/e/ESCWA_30th_MS. The Security and Safety Section at ESCWA will be responsible for issuing the necessary ground passes/identity badges for all participants and delegates, who should wear those badges at all times. To that end, delegates are kindly requested to provide a passport type photo (JPG), which they can send to Ms. Shadia Abdallah at abdallah6@un.org, no later than two weeks prior to the opening of the session.

Session documentation

During the session, documents will be available in limited quantities at the documents distribution desk in the conference area. Participants are thus requested to bring with them the complete set of session documents, which can be downloaded from the relevant page on the ESCWA website, available at https://www.unescwa.org.

Delegates wishing to submit documents for circulation should present them to Mr. Karim Khalil, Secretary of the Commission (khalil31@un.org; fax +961-1-981510/1) for clearance prior to distribution by ESCWA meeting assistants. It should be noted that a minimum of 100 copies are required to ensure distribution to all delegations. In accordance with the United Nations rules and regulations for the control and limitation of documentation, the ESCWA secretariat may not undertake to translate or reproduce documents or statements submitted by individual delegations unless they are cleared.

Session documents will be distributed in the conference room by ESCWA staff. Other ESCWA publications will be available outside the conference room.

III. FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Session venue

The meetings of the thirtieth session will be held at the United Nations House, which is the permanent headquarters of ESCWA situated at Riad el-Solh Square in Beirut Central District. The building includes three large conference rooms and several smaller meeting rooms at the mezzanine (MZ) and B1 levels. All meetings will be held in the main conference room at the B1 level. All floors are equipped with facilities for persons with special needs.

Travel services

Travel assistance is available through the ESCWA Travel Unit located on the first floor of the United Nations House (room F-140, ext. 1143 or 1187) and open during office hours from 7.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Participants are requested to communicate to the ESCWA secretariat the expected date and time of their arrival in Beirut and their flight number. It is advisable to confirm return travel arrangements well in advance.

Prayer room

The prayer room is located at the mezzanine (MZ) level.

Food

The cafeteria, located on the ground floor of the United Nations House, provides a wide range of meals, snacks, desserts and beverages.

Library

A large library occupies much of the second floor of the United Nations House and is open from Monday to Friday, from 7.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for internal users, and from 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. for external users. Participants will have access, on the premises only, to publications, journals and newspapers, the Internet and online databases. The library can also provide research services on any topic of interest to participants.

Information services and media coverage

The public meetings of the session will be open to representatives of the press and of other information media invited by the United Nations. Those representatives will be provided with the required passes and needed facilities. The ESCWA Communication and Information Unit (ECIU) provides the media, government officials,

non-governmental organizations and other entities with information on United Nations activities, documents, press releases and other information materials. The ECIU also produces press releases, collaborates with local radio and television broadcasters and media organizations, and participates in arranging media events to promote the activities of ESCWA and other United Nations entities.

The ESCWA website https://www.unescwa.org provides up-to-date information on the structure and activities of the ESCWA secretariat as well as other press materials.

All enquiries related to media coverage and public information should be directed by e-mail to Mr. Nabil Abu Dargham (dargham@un.org).

Medical services

Medical facilities in cases of emergency will be provided at ESCWA during official working hours from Monday to Friday, from 7.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The ESCWA clinic is located on the first floor of the United Nations House (rooms F-145 to F-147, ext. 1145 or 1146). For serious emergencies, the clinic will ensure immediate transportation by ambulance and admission to a hospital with first-class facilities.

In the event of a medical emergency, the following ESCWA staff can be contacted for assistance and proper directions:

Name	Position	Telephone
Dr. Josette Sfeir	Doctor	+961-1-978144
Ms. Lina Soubra	Nurse	+961-1-978145
Ms. Maya Louka	Nurse	+961-1-978146
Ms. Lamia el-Hage	Administrative Officer	+961-1-978139

There are many hospitals in Beirut with efficient medical equipment, including four major university hospitals within a short drive from the United Nations House, which are the following:

Hospital	Telephone
American University of Beirut Medical Centre	+961-1-350000/374374
Hôtel-Dieu de France Hospital	+961-1-615400/615300
Saint-George Hospital University Medical Centre	+961-1-441000 +961-1-575700/1287
Rafic Hariri University Hospital	+961-1-830000

Security and safety

The ESCWA Security and Safety Section (ground floor, ext. 1025) operates on a 24-hour basis and maintains contact with all local emergency services and relevant authorities. Security officers are always prepared to provide assistance in all matters relating to security and safety and to provide information on how to contact ESCWA staff members, if necessary.

Internet access

Wireless Internet is available on all floors including the ground floor as well as MZ and B1 conference areas. Access to the Internet requires a pass key, which is posted in public areas on each floor.

Telecommunications services

The country code for Lebanon is (+961). The area code is (01) for Beirut and (03), (70), (71), (76), (80) or (81) for mobile phones. If you are dialing Lebanon from outside the country, you must omit the (0) in the area code and for mobile phones starting with (03). For example, to reach the ESCWA secretariat from outside Lebanon, you may dial the country code +961 followed by the mobile or area code then by the six-digit phone number (+961-1-xxxxxx for placing calls to Beirut, or +961-3-xxxxxx or +961-70-xxxxxx for placing calls to mobile phone numbers, for example).

The main listed telephone number of ESCWA is +961-1-981301. Direct calls can be made to the required staff member from inside Lebanon by dialing 01-978 followed by the last three digits of the four-digit extension of the party sought. For example, if the extension being sought is **1900** then the number to dial from inside Lebanon would be 01-978**900**. Direct internal calls from within the United Nations House can be made by dialing the four-digit extension alone.

Information on telephone calls may be obtained from the ESCWA Communications Unit (room F-229, ext. 1229); the operator may be reached within the building by dialing "9". Personal telephone calls, fax, mail and courier services may be provided against cash payment.

Most Lebanese people use mobile phones, and coverage extends throughout the country. Mobile phone cards can be purchased from post offices, kiosks, small shops and mobile phone retail shops, which are abundantly available throughout Lebanon.

Contact numbers in ESCWA

Office of the Executive Secretary

Name	Position	Telephone
Mr. Karim Khalil	Secretary of the Commission	+961-1-978847

Administrative Services Division (ASD)

Name	Position	Telephone
Ms. Nidale Noun	Chief, Conference Services Section	+961-1-978116

Chiefs of substantive divisions

Name	Position	Telephone
Ms. Rola Majdalani	Director, Sustainable Development Policies Division (SDPD)	+961-1-978502
Mr. Haidar Fraihat	Director, Technology for Development Division (TDD)	+961-1-978549
Mr. Mohamed el-Moctar Mohamed el-Hacene	Director, Economic Development and Integration Division (EDID)	+961-1-978438
Mr. Frederico Neto	Director, Social Development Division (SDD)	+961-1-978417
Mr. Juraj Riecan	Director, Statistics Division (SD)	+961-1-978351
Mr. Tarik Alami	Director, Emerging and Conflict-related Issues Division (ECRI)	+961-1-978616
Ms. Mehrinaz el-Awadi	Director, ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW)	+961-1-978650

ESCWA Communication and Information Unit (ECIU)

Name	Position	Telephone
Mr. Nabil Abu Dargham	Communication and Information Officer	+961-1-978652

Security and Safety Section

Name	Position	Telephone
Mr. Said Jannoun	Chief, Security and Safety Section	+961-1-978009

Lebanese ministries

Ministry of Foreign Affairs	+961-1-213510
Ministry of Tourism	+961-1-740864

IV. FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN LEBANON

Accommodation

Hotel accommodation is available in Beirut at reasonable rates for persons attending or participating in the session. A comprehensive list of hotels in the area and their prices will be prepared and circulated by the ESCWA secretariat.

Weather

Weather in Lebanon is generally moderate, typical of many Mediterranean countries. In summer, the weather is relatively hot and humid. During the session, the temperature in Beirut is expected to range between 28°C and 34°C, with low probability of precipitation.

Banking, currency and exchange rates

The unit of currency is the Lebanese pound. Coins are issued in denominations of LBP 250 and 500 and notes in denominations of LBP 1,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000 and 100,000. The current exchange rate is around LBP 1,500 for $1.00.

There are no restrictions on the inflow and outflow of local and foreign currency or on the exchange and transfer of currencies. Banks are open between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., from Monday to Friday, and between 9 a.m. and 12 noon on Saturdays. Exchange offices are open until late in the evening. There are several banks located in the vicinity of the United Nations House.

Money can be exchanged at banks, private exchange offices and major hotels. The best exchange rate is provided by banks and exchange offices. Credit cards, such as Visa, MasterCard and, to a lesser extent, American Express and others are accepted

at most stores, restaurants and hotels throughout the country. Automatic teller machines (ATMs) are also widely available in the main areas.

Transportation

Many transportation agencies in Beirut have modern buses available for sightseeing and tourist trips to various areas in Lebanon. There are numerous car rental and taxi offices. Commuting between hotels and the United Nations House can be made by taxi or "service". "Service" vehicles may be hailed in the streets of Beirut. However, it is recommended to use taxi companies, which are considered safer. Popular online taxi apps are widely used in Lebanon.

Restaurants

There are many Lebanese and international cuisine restaurants in Beirut. Several are located a few minutes' walk away from the United Nations House. More information on restaurants can be obtained from any hotel in Beirut.

Sightseeing

The capital of Lebanon is Beirut. Other main cities include Tripoli, Byblos (Jbeil), Sidon (Saida) and Tyre (Sur). The Lebanese Parliament building and the Grand Serail, headquarters of the Prime Minister, are in Beirut Central District. Roman ruins can also be visited there. Within walking distance is the Corniche, a wide paved walkway along the sea; and the famous Hamra Street, for those who like to shop. The Ministry of Tourism or any travel agency may be contacted for further information on guided tours or other cultural and tourist sites of interest in Lebanon. The most important natural and historical landmarks in the country are the cedars, which serve as the country's national emblem, Baalbeck, Beiteddine, Byblos, Jeitta Grotto, Aanjar and Qadisha Valley. The following websites may be visited for more information on tourist and historical sites: http://www.mot.gov.lb; http://www.destinationlebanon.gov.lb and http://www.lebanon.com/tourism.

Government office hours

Working hours in government offices are from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., except on Saturdays, Sundays and official holidays. No official holidays coincide with the session.

Internet

High-speed Internet access for free or for a small fee is available in many hotels. Many cafés and restaurants offer Wi-Fi access throughout Lebanon.

Language

While Arabic is Lebanon's official language, English and French are widely spoken. Many establishments provide signs, menus and information in both Arabic and English.

Time

Lebanese daylight saving time is GMT+3 hours from the beginning of April till the end of October.

Electrical current

The electrical current is 220 or 110 volts AC country-wide.

Useful numbers in Lebanon

Internal security forces (police)	112
Civil defense	125
Fire brigade	175
Red Cross	140
Telephone directory (Ogero)	1515
Beirut International Airport inquiries	150